



Environment and
Climate Change Canada

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Ontario

July 9, 2019

Samuel Pegg, Remedial Action Plan Coordinator
Thunder Bay Area of Concern

Re: Thunder Bay Area of Concern - Status of the Bird or Animal Deformities or Reproduction Problems Beneficial Use Impairment

Dear Samuel:

As Annex 4 (Areas of Concern Annex) leads for the Canada-Ontario Agreement on Great Lakes Water Quality and Ecosystem Health, Dan and I support the "not impaired" designation, and congratulate the Thunder Bay RAP Team, Public Advisory Committee and local community for attaining this important environmental milestone.

We base our concurrence on the following information. When Thunder Bay was identified as an Area of Concern in 1987, discharges of pollutants from local pulp and paper industries and wastewater treatment plants, as well as atmospheric deposition and urban runoff, had impaired water quality and ecosystem health. At the time, contaminants of concern included dioxins and furans, mercury and polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), which the Stage 1 Remedial Action Plan (RAP) report (1991) identified as a potential risk for causing deformities and reproduction problems in birds and animals. Studies were planned to determine if deformities and reproduction problems were occurring because of chemical contamination, and the status of this beneficial use was identified as "requires further assessment".

Environment and Climate Change Canada undertook various assessments of reproduction, health effects and contaminant levels in colonial waterbirds nesting within the Thunder Bay Area of Concern from 2000-2008, and again in 2012, 2014 and 2015. The results of these studies demonstrate that there are no bird deformities or reproduction problems in the Thunder Bay Area of Concern, as identified within the attached technical report *Assessment of the Wildlife Reproduction and Deformities Beneficial Use Impairment in the Thunder Bay Area of Concern*.

The beneficial use impairment assessment report underwent a thorough technical review, by the RAP Team, the RAP Public Advisory Committee, the RAP Implementation Committee, Fort William First Nation, Métis Nation of Ontario, and Red Sky Métis Independent Nation. A significant public engagement program was also undertaken, and there were no objections to the assessment or recommended change in status. We look forward to continued progress toward our shared goal of delisting the Thunder Bay Area of Concern.

Sincerely,

Sandra Kok
COA Annex 4 Lead for Canada (A)
Manager, Great Lakes Areas of Concern (A)
Environment and Climate Change Canada

Daniel Joyce
COA Annex 4 Lead for Ontario (A)
Great Lakes Divisional Manager (A)
Ontario Ministry of the Environment,
Conservation and Parks



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